

THE MODERN HOUSE



South Hill Park, London NW3
Sold

Housden House

One of the great post-war Modern houses in London, Housden House was designed and built by architect Brian Housden for himself and his family between 1963-65. The house was given a Grade-II listing in 2014 by Historic England, representing a “completely unique piece of architectural vision and ingenuity that synthesises [sic] a great wealth of influences and ideas and is executed with an intensity and conviction that is entirely personal”. Presented to the market in beautifully original condition, this is the first time that the house has been available for sale.

The house is part of an important movement in post-war housing, and stands out as an historic example of Camden Council’s innovative approach towards design. The concept is a clear demonstration of Housden’s understanding of pioneering European modernism, sharing many principles with the Rietveld Schröder House in Utrecht and Pierre Chareau’s Maison de Verre in Paris. As the Historic England listing suggests, despite the obvious influences “the house possesses a consistency and novelty of vision that is entirely Housden’s”.

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The house is set back from the street, behind a recessed and partly covered parking space and sunken patio that permits light to the lower ground floor. The façade, a mix of protruding concrete platforms and glass bricks, belies the scale of the house, which is best captured from the rear. The back of the house is almost completely glazed with glass bricks, flooding the internal space with a warm westerly light at every level. The favourable elevation of South Hill Park gives the house a wonderful vantage point above Hampstead No.1 pond and views of the heath beyond.

Entrance is to a short hall that opens onto the first of two living spaces, with access to a large west-facing balcony that gives the first view of the heath. A dramatic void space occupies one side of the room, dropping to the lower level via a concrete staircase. The supporting balustrade is capped with an extraordinary pink-toned marble.

The lower-ground floor contains the main living areas, a largely open-plan space that has access to the patio garden. The focal point of the room is a wonderful sunken dining area, equipped with a beautiful bespoke circular dining table. The floor is laid with mosaic tiles, mostly a brilliant blue with zones of off-white. The room can be partitioned by dramatically colourful curtains that weave through the room on ceiling-mounted tracks – a later addition to the design. A free-standing kitchen sits at the front of the plan, an area that extends beneath the car space above, with doors to the aforementioned sunken courtyard.

A concrete staircase, at ground-floor level, switches back on itself to reach the first floor, where there are two bedrooms. The master bedroom is the real showpiece of the house, a truly exceptional space of dramatic proportions, with soaring ceiling height and a full wall of glass bricks that is punctured with deliberately placed windows that offer controlled glimpses of the heath whilst conserving privacy. An open bathroom in the corner of the room demonstrates an appreciation for exposed structures and services exemplified in the likes of Maison de Verre and Adolf Rading's design for the 1929 Breslau Werkbundsiedlung.

Upstairs there are two further bedrooms, one on the first floor and another a half level above. Both have simplified versions of the open bathroom of the master space. A mezzanine storage level sits over the hall space, replete with Rietveld-esque colourful sliding doors and accessed by a fixed steel ladder. A second ladder gives access to the flat roof through an impressive roof lantern designed to light the stairwell below. The fourth bedroom / study is positioned on the ground floor, adjacent to the entrance hall.

The house is in fascinatingly original condition, having been lovingly maintained by the Housden family throughout its history.

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South Hill Park is very well located, bordering the south-eastern end of Hampstead Heath. The house is a short walk from the centre of Hampstead Village with its excellent variety of shops and restaurants, and access to the London Overground at Hampstead Heath station. Nearby Belsize Park and Hampstead underground stations are on the Northern Line.

Read our recent interview: [Open House: Brian Housden's daughters on how their father designed Housden House, inspired by early European Modernist architecture](#)



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About

The Modern House is an estate agency that helps people live in more thoughtful and beautiful ways. We believe in design as a powerful force for good. Inspired by the principles of modernism, we represent design-led homes across the UK which celebrate light, space and a truth to materials. Esquire credits The Modern House with “rewriting the rulebook on estate agency” and GQ voted us “one of the best things in the world”.